

3.2.1 The Eternal Universe and Providence

The creation and ordering of the universe cannot be attributed to spontaneous random chance (as is proposed by Epicurus). Only someone who lacks both intelligence and basic sense perceptions could come to such an irrational conclusion. This issue has been discussed at length and many arguments have been put forth to disprove of this conception of the universe already. Still, a discussion is warrenred with regards to how the objects of the sensible world Exist, and how they come into Being. More specifically, the Evil beings which exist raise many questions about universal Providence. Such considerations lead some to deny that there is a Providence which governs things in an ordered way, and leads others to believe that the Demiurgic forces which govern the universe are Evil themselves. Given the importance of what is at stake, this topic deserves a thorough investigation beginning with its very first principles.

For the sake of keeping this discussion on topic, we will refrain from discussing the nature of an individual's Providence. By this, we mean that an individual can make calculations and use reasoning to decide what they will do before they act in order to achieve desired outcomes and avoid undesired outcomes. We will also assume that there is a universal Providence as our first principle, as the purpose of this discussion is to deduce the consequences of this Principle.

Suppose that there was a beginning to the universe. Namely, that the universe did not exist in the past, but then came into Being at some particular moment. This view assumes a variety of individual Providence. In this case, there must be some Reason why the universe was created at this moment. Thus, Divinity itself made a calculated decision to create the universe at some point in time with the goal being to make it as Good as possible.

However, we hold that the universe is Eternal. We hold that it has no beginning. Consequently, we must provide sound reasons to propose that there is a Universal Providence. It is our view that this Universal Providence is due to the fact that everything within the Universe is arranged in accordance with Nous, the Divine Intellect. We hold that Nous is prior to the sensible universe, not in terms of time, but because the universe is contingent upon it. Since this Divine Intellect is a prerequisite for the sensible world, it must come first. In a way, Intellect can be thought of as the blueprint or model for this universe. The Eternal nature of Intellect results in the Eternal nature of the universe, as the universe proceeds from it in its image.

This is how Nous continually emanates the Being of the universe and ensures its Existence. The Intellectual realm of Nous is thus the true universe. It is prior to everything else in the universe. It has no magnitude or extension, it is indivisible, and it is without imperfection. Even what we refer to as its parts are not separate from it. The universe is at once this Intellect and Life. The thought and Life of this universe are unified. Everything is within it, and this lack of separation means that there is perfect harmony. Nothing can be in opposition, as there are no truly separate entities to be in opposition with one another. Each part is itself the whole.

Since this unified transcendent whole is perfect, it must be at rest. It does not produce anything or fluctuate. Since it is perfect, it has no reason to change. Since it is perfect, it has no need for anything in addition. Why would perfect Reason generate additional Reason? Why would perfect Intellect generate additional Intellect? The desire and power to generate is relegated to things which are not full and perfect. That which is truly blessed is content to simply Be what it is. Any change or addition is dangerous, as it could only disrupt what is already perfect. The ultimate universe is truly blessed

because it achieves its purpose without any action and produces everything without losing anything of itself.

3.2.2 The Sensible World Proceeds From Intellect Out of Necessity

This true, unified, and singular cosmos produces the lower sensible world. The sensible world exists in a state of multiplicity, where Beings are differentiated from one another and thus separated. There is no longer harmony, but conflict among these separated Beings. The individuality of each thing is a product of its relative deficiency compared to the unified whole (after all, each thing is just itself and thus lacks everything that it is not), and necessarily produces conflict among the separated entities. Because things of this world are derivative, they are not self-sufficient and must consume things external to themselves. Thus, they become the enemy of the things they need to destroy in order to preserve themselves.

The sensible world was not created as a calculated, deliberate act. It exists out of Necessity. The true, Intellectual cosmos (i.e. Nous) could not be the final point of emanation. It is so powerful that it contains and is the source of all power. It creates without desire or intention. If the true cosmos needed to endeavor to create, then its power could not be said to be innate, natural, and Essential. Its creative acts would be accidental to it and a skill to be learned, like an artist's ability to create art or craftsman's ability to make crafts. The creative power of the Intellectual cosmos is Essential to it, and therefore it is inconceivable for it to stop its creative process of emanating the sensible world.

By imparting some of itself into Matter, Nous, the Principle of Intellect produces without effort or disruption. The sensible Beings become the expressions of this principle. The expression of an Intellectual Principle is the silent power of Nous, and this expression will necessarily flow so long as there is Intellect. When that which is expressed remains purely Intellectual (and thus incorporeal), there is no basis for conflict and everything is in harmony. When this Principle is expressed into Mass, it generates parts which can come into physical conflict with one another. The Intellectual Principle is like a seed, and expression is like its growth into a plant. When as a seed, it has no parts to conflict. Once it grows, its branches might interfere with one another.

The sensible world stems from a singular Intellectual principle, but through its expression it becomes particularized. Its parts may be friendly or indifferent to one other, or they may conflict with each other. Its parts might even consume one another. Some parts do their harm to other parts willingly, others harm unintentionally. Sometimes the harm is so great as to destroy future generations. Yet within the chaos of the sensible world, the Divine realm of Intellect imposes a single harmoniously unified Act. Each part strikes its own note, but all parts are brought into harmony for the benefit of the unified whole.

The sensible world does not enjoy perfect Intellect and Reason. Such perfection is limited to the Divine itself. The objects of the sensible world merely participate in these Intellectual Principles as their expression. The sensible world is produced out of Necessity from Intellect. The process of Reason is absent from Necessity by definition (because it is the process of deliberation, while Necessity occurs naturally), and so Necessity's nature is to drag the sensible world away from Reason and Intellect. Yet Intellect is sovereign over Necessity.

The Divine Intellectual Realm is pure Reason, a pure expression of Intellect. As a consequence, nothing else can be a pure expression of Intellect. The sensible world then must be an impure mixture of Intellect and Matter. It is neither perfectly ordered, as is Nous, nor perfectly indefinite, as is Matter. The sensible world takes on aspects of each, as it is a product of their mixture. Soul presides over this mixing

process, expressing the Intellectual Forms into Matter. Soul does not exert itself or lose something in this governing process. It acts effortlessly as a product of its very nature.

3.2.3 The Sensible World Has Purpose

We should not condemn the sensible world for its relative lack of Beauty as compared to the Divine Intellectual Realm. We shouldn't even condemn it for failure to be as Beautiful as it possible could be. Certainly we should not condemn its source. The sensible world exists out of Necessity, not as some deliberated act which can be scrutinized. It is produced Necessarily from the higher realm to bear its likeness.

Further, even if there were a deliberated decision to generate the sensible world, this decision cannot be credibly criticized. Divinity has produced a sensible world which is Beautiful, complete, self-sufficient, and harmonious. Each piece plays its part, contributing to the greater whole for the benefit of the small and insignificant parts as much as for the big and significant parts. We cannot judge the whole based on each part individually. We must judge each part as it contributes to the transcendent harmony. To judge the entire cosmos based on one of its parts is akin to judging an entire Human Being based on a single hair or toe. It would be like ignoring all of the marvelous species of animal and choosing to focus on the ones which are the meanest. It would be the same as judging all of humanity based on the actions of a fool like Thersites.

If we study the transcendent whole of the sensible world, we might listen and hear, "I was produced by Divinity itself to perfection. I am complete and self-sufficient because nothing can be added to or removed from me. I contain all plants and animals. Nature, the Gods, Daemons, Good Souls, and Virtuous people are all within me. Do not make the mistake of recognizing the Soul of every animal on Earth and in the sea, while failing to recognize the Souls within the Air, Aether, and the Heavens. All share in Soul. There are Good Souls there which give birth to Stars, preserve the order of the Heavens, and keep it in motion along its circuit. This Heavenly circuit is Eternally in perfect harmony, revolving around its center in faithful replication of Divine Intellect itself. All of this is within me, and strives for the Good. Each part achieves this Good commensurately with its capabilities. The whole of the Heavens depends on The Good. So does my Soul, and the Gods that inhabit my every part. Everything within me lives and grows, even the things you dismiss as Soulless and inanimate. To you, everything appears to only participate in the whole in part. Some things seem only to Exist, while others possess life. Fewer appear to possess senses, and even fewer possess an Intellect. The select few participate in all aspects of life. Yet you should not expect all things to participate in everything. You do not expect a finger to see. This is a job for an eye. You should expect a finger to be a finger with its own identity and power. "

3.2.4 On Violence and Suffering Within The Sensible World

We should not be surprised when Water extinguishes Fire, or when Fire burns through other objects. Sensible objects are brought into existence by power outside of themselves. Even the substance of these objects was once external to them. Some prior object is destroyed when it is reformed to create a new sensible object (see Heraclitus). Consequently, the destruction of a sensible object does not truly bring about annihilation, but rather represents a transformation. Further, when one Fire is extinguished, another Fire is set ablaze somewhere else.

In the incorporeal realm, everything remains permanently. In the sensible world, the totality itself is Eternal along with its most essential components. Souls, however, animate different bodies at different times, choosing bodies with forms that match their disposition at the time. When it eventually gains the ability to do so, a Soul will stand outside of the realm of bodies and reunite with the universal Soul of All.

Bodies achieve life by their union with Form and Idea. The Particulars derive their existence from the Universals. It is from these presiding sources (i.e. Forms, Ideas, and Universals) that animals derive their life and the sustenance which keeps them alive. This is because life in the sensible world is subject to change and flux. Only the Divine Intellectual Realm is without movement. From this stillness, motion emanates. The self-contained stillness of Nous emanates the motion that becomes an Animated Being. The breath and movement of these living Beings is their life.

Conflict, violence, and death are necessary for an Animated Body. This is because their existence is not self-contained, but rather contingent on other things. They are brought into existence as an expression of an Intellectual Principle. These Intellectual Principles which produce everything in the sensible world are all contained within The Divine Intellectual Realm. After all, how could they exist in the sensible world if they did not exist Intellectually first (i.e. in terms of potential)? All of Matter must be formed in some way as the expression of an Intellectual principle.

In the same way, the violence Human Beings do to one another is done in pursuit of the Good (see Democritus). In their failure to attain the Good for themselves, people turn on one another. They are punished for these transgressions via the degradation of their Souls, which will consequently become lower forms of life after their death. Nothing escapes from the Order established by the Law of the universe. Adrastea sees to it that Divine retribution is served.

This does not imply that Order stems from Disorder, or Law stems from Lawlessness (as is put forth by Epicurus). This would be to say that Evil is a necessary precursor to the existence of Law and Order. That which is better does not exist on account of that which is worse. The opposite is the case. Disorder exists as a consequence of Order, Lawlessness as a consequence of Law, and Irrationality as a consequence of Reason. This is because the Order, Law, and Reason that exists in the sensible world is only an image of their corresponding Principles in the Intellectual. It is not that the inferior images of the sensible world cause their Principles. Rather, things of the sensible world are hindered from full participation in these superior Principles. They are hindered by their own natures, by accidents, or the unintended consequences of some other event (as thought Chrysippus). Things which can only achieve Order via their participation in something accidental to themselves can be hindered in their attempt to participate.

Animals with Free Will sometimes choose to pursue the Good, and other times pursue Evil (see Phaedrus by Plato). They certainly do not begin by choosing Evil as their goal, but divergence from Good leads one away from it. The further someone follows a divergent path, the further away from their goal they become. For one, an Animated Body has needs and appetites. When something excites us at first experience, we are easily carried away by our unconscious thoughts and actions if we don't correct ourselves right away. Divine retribution follows if we get carried away. It is Just that someone who blindly follows their appetites receives a commensurate punishment. It is Unjust for those who have never done anything to be worthy of Happiness to demand it. Only the Good may be Happy. Even the Gods are only Happy because they are Good.

3.2.5 Good Puts Evil to Use

Since it is possible for all Souls to achieve Happiness, those who fail to be Happy cannot blame the universe for their lot. They can only blame their own inadequacy, as Happiness is reserved for the Virtuous. Since Human Beings are not born Divine, it is no surprise that they do not enjoy a Divine life automatically. Truly Good people are unphased by poverty and illness. Only the Evil see them as disastrous (see The Elegiac Poems of Theognis). All who possess a Body are subject to illness.

Poverty and illness serve the greater purpose of the universe as a whole. After all, when something is destroyed, the universe sees to it that something else is created. The expressed Intellectual Principle changes. When a body weakens and its passions have sway over Soul, the body which wastes away is inevitably put to use in another order. What is more, some people actually benefit from poverty and illness. Even Vice serves a purpose as a lesson in why it is important to do the right thing. It reinforces an aversion to wickedness within Good people, and teaches the benefits of Virtue in contrast with the Divine Retribution felt by the wicked. Now we should be careful to note that Evil does not exist specifically for these purposes. Rather, the Divine Reason of the universe puts it to Good use. This is proof of its power. It can use the wicked for Good and turn the destruction of one form into the ordering of another.

Thus, Evil can be seen as a failure to achieve Goodness. Evil is always present in the sensible world because all of the Good which exists here is necessary manifest within something distinct from The Good itself. Because there is something distinct from The Good itself, we end up with things that are a mixture of Good and not Good. This Mixture of Good and that which is not Good necessitates the existence of Evil. Evil will always exist because anything which is not the Good necessarily falls short of it. Everything which exists apart from The Good gains its distinct existence by being different from Good, and is thus less Good.

3.2.6 The Juxtaposition Between Divine Justice and Worldly Affairs

It has been objected that sometimes Good people have misfortunes, and some Evil people thrive. The truth of the matter is that no harm can come to Good people, and nothing positive can come to Evil people. Still, an explanation is in order as to why sometimes it seems that people get the opposite of what they deserve. How can these circumstances which are so offensive to us be permitted to occur?

For one, since pleasant environment adds nothing to Happiness, and since an unpleasant environment does nothing to punish an Evil man, environmental circumstances are of little importance (See Book IX of Republic by Plato). This holds true in other scenarios. A Good person loses nothing if they happen to be ugly, and an Evil person gains nothing if they happen to be attractive.

Even so, it seems odd that Divine Justice appears to be incongruent in these cases where people receive the opposite of what they deserve. How can Good people become slaves while Evil people become masters and even rulers? The most powerful king can commit the most savage of crimes, and those who are victorious in battle commit the most horrendous atrocities against their defeated opponents. How can any of this occur under the guidance of Providence?

Even if Providence prioritizes the interest of the unified whole of the system, it must still take care of the constituent parts of the whole to some degree. These parts have a role to fulfill, especially living Beings with Souls, Life, and Reason. Providence must extend to all things, even the smallest of details. Since we claim that Divine Intellect is the producer of this universe and that it is omnipresent within it, we must show how every single thing in the universe is well ordered.

3.2.7 Although The Sensible World is Inferior, It Receives As Much Beauty As It Can

Since the sensible world is a mixture of Good and Evil, we must not desire to find as much Good in the sensible world as we do in the unmixed Divine. Further, we should not expect to find all of the characteristics of the mixed sensible world in the unmixed Divine. The mixed sensible world is comprised partly of body, so we must consider that this body contributes something to the unified whole and

demand only that it receives as much Good as it possibly can from the Divine. For example, suppose we were considering the most Beautiful Human in the world. This person is distinct from the Intellectual Principle of a Human. Since they are made of flesh and bones, we should be grateful that the Intellectual Principle gets expressed Beautifully within the matter of their flesh and bones via Divine Reason.

Once we accept this process, we are ready to take the next step on our path to understanding the wondrous power of Providence that produces this universe. First, we will examine the free choices Souls make when they choose to engage in acts of Evil against the Virtuous and Vicious alike. Unless Providence is responsible for the wicked nature of an Evil Soul, we have no grounds to place any blame on it for the Evil choices that Souls make freely. As we have expressed before, an Individual Soul must have self-originating movement. A living animal is not unmixed Soul, but Soul mixed with a body. They are animals with a distinct character and behaviors appropriate to the animal.

The sensible world does not cause Souls to animated bodies. Antecedent to the animation or production of any body, Souls possess the power to generate and affect the objects of the sensible world. Soul can emanate influence while remaining incorporeal, descend into a body to affect it, or a combination of both. At present the point isn't to discuss the details of this process, but rather to show that Providence is not to blame for these processes and their consequences.

The other half of the question concerns Divine Justice and Providence in the cases where Good people receive retribution fit for Evil people, and where Evil people receive rewards fit for Good people. Why are there Good people who are poor? Why are there Evil people who are rich? Why do bad people have what they need in abundance and obtain the power to rule over others? It can appear as though Providence fails to reach Earth. Yet Providence does reach Earth. This is proven by the fact that the Intellectual Principles of Divine Reason are expressed here. All plants and animals express Reason, Life, and Soul.

Some (i.e. Gnostics) might object and say that Providence reaches Earth, but is not sovereign over it. Yet the entire sensible world is a single living Being. Such an objection is like asserting that the face of a person is derived from Providence, but the rest of their body is a product of chance and deterministic forces. It would be the same as claiming someone's face was created to be better by a superior nature than that which generated the rest of their body. It is neither Wise nor Pious to denigrate the whole because some of its parts are less noble than others.

3.2.8 Worldly Affairs Derive From Natural Law

Next we must explain how the Sensible World is Good and how it participates in the transcendent Order. At least we should prove that it is not Evil, and determine which parts of it participate in Order and which parts do not.

For every Living Being, its highest parts are the most Beautiful. The head and face are the most beautiful, while the middle and lower are less so. Now, Human Beings inhabit the middle and lower parts of the sensible world. Above them reside the Heavenly Bodies, which are the Gods that dwell in the Sensible World. The circuit of the Heavenly Bodies makes up the majority of the Sensible World. Earth itself is just a single point among the Stars.

Human Beings give great importance to the Evil acts committed by other people because they believe that we are important on the cosmic scale. We believe that we are the wisest of Beings. In reality, Humanity resides at a mid point between Beasts and Gods. We are pulled in both directions, and some

people are inclined to act more like Beasts while others are inclined more to the Gods. Most people are somewhere in between. The people who act like Beasts violently drag down the people in the middle. While the people caught in the middle are better than those who act like Beasts, they are weak enough to be susceptible to the violence of worse people. They cannot be called Good, as they have failed to prepare themselves to defend against this violence and the parts of themselves which are inclined away from Reason.

If a gang of young people whom are morally corrupt but physically fit bully another group of young people who have failed to develop themselves both morally and physically, what else should we do but laugh? Even law enforcement would allow this to happen on their watch as a just punishment for the laziness and failure to prepare of the second group. The Gymnasium is available to them as well, so they only have their own negligence to blame. If you allow yourself to become fat like a lamb, you also become like prey to the wolf.

Those who commit Evil acts are also punished. They pay for their disposition with their very wolflike nature, as this is a disaster for their character as a Human Being. They will also receive their due punishment after their death, for every act results in its natural consequence. The better you are, the better things become for you. The worse you are, the worse things become for you.

The rewards and punishments in Life and Death are nothing like child's play at the Gymnasium. If the groups of young people from before grow older but retain their foolishness, then they arm themselves with weapons and fight each other in a spectacle that is much more intense than children wrestling. Yet in life, people do not prepare themselves for Life's battles equally. Those who are better armed naturally prevail. Not even the Gods can fight on behalf of those who have no ability to fight for themselves. The Law of Nature decrees that skilled warriors return from battle unharmed, not those who pray. It is just the same that those who put labor into tending to their fields have a more bountiful harvest than those who merely pray for it. Only those who take care of their bodies remain healthy. Thus, we should not be surprised if the wicked are strong, have abundant crops, and are in good physical health in cases where they put greater effort into achieving these goals.

It is naïve to think that we can live life however we please, ignoring the prescriptions of the Gods, and expect them to save us in spite of ourselves. Death is better than a Life lived in opposition to the Laws of Nature. If Vice had no consequence, and everything remained peaceful for those who live in wickedness, then perhaps we would be justified in questioning Providence. The Evil rule as a consequence of the weakness and cowardice of the ruled. Rule by cowardly weaklings would hardly be Just.

3.2.9 Providence Presides Over Humanity Via Natural Law

We should not extend our conception of Providence to the point that it negates the freedom of our own actions and removes our accountability. This is why the Laws of Nature are Just. If Providence alone were responsible for everything, then Providence would be all that exists. Yet such an arrangement would render Providence unnecessary. After all, what would Providence apply to if there were nothing else besides itself? Everything would be reduced to Divinity.

It is without question that Divinity Exists and extends over all things. However, Divinity does not reduce everything else to nothing. Divinity is to preside over all things, not destroy their individuality. For example, Divinity approaches Humanity, preserving the nature of what it means to be a Human. This Providence which preserves the nature of Humanity does so via the laws of Nature which are impossible to escape. To be bound by the laws of Nature is to be presided over by Providence.

The laws of Providence decree that Good will come to the Virtuous and Evil will come to the Vicious. Both in this Life and after. Providence cannot entail that Good people must come to the rescue of Evil people merely because the Evil people pray for a savior. The Divine will not renounce their perfect existence to hold our hands through Human affairs. Good people who live in accordance with laws superior to the laws of Humanity cannot be expected to control the lives of the wicked and rule over them. After all, the wicked don't attempt to bring Goodness to the governance of others, nor do they attempt to bring Goodness to themselves. They only have spite and contempt for people who become Good through their own force of will. The wicked do not even desire for Good people to lead them. If they did, they would choose Good rulers and society would thus produce more Good people.

Human Beings are certainly not among the most noble Being in the universe. By their choices, they are somewhere in the middle. Yet this relatively inferior position does not mean that Divine Providence controls them completely, reducing Humanity to nothing. In fact, Providence serves to perpetuate Humanity and its methods guide it towards refinement. Natural Law selects for Virtue. This is why Humanity has never lost its ability to use Reason, and why Humanity has always (to varying degrees) participated in Wisdom, Art, Intelligence, Cooperation and Justice. Even those of us who do Evil desire to do Good, they are just mistaken in how to achieve it.

These positive traits mean that Humanity is Beautiful. It is as Beautiful as it possibly can be given the nature of reality. Humanity plays its part in the universe itself, and does so at a superior position than all other forms of Life on Earth.

No one with any Wisdom denigrates the other animals on Earth. What point is there in complaining that some animals will attack Human Beings? As if Humanity should struggle through nothing and sleep through their lives. All animals serve a purpose. They benefit us and the whole system in ways that we can deduce, as well as in ways which are unknown to us for now. Time will surely reveal that there is nothing in the animal world without purpose. They must have purpose both in of themselves and as an asset to Humanity. How can we complain that Animals are wild, when there are Human Beings who are wild as well? If animals thus are weary of Humanity and attack us in response to this distrust, should we really be surprised?

3.2.10 Evil Acts Derive From Causal Agency

If it is true that Evil Human Beings only do Evil out of ignorance (and not because they seek to do Evil itself), how can we justly blame Evil people for their actions and hold them accountable to the suffering they inflict on other people? Indeed, if the actions of Evil people are a product of Necessity, whether they are caused by the movements of the Heavenly bodies (i.e. Astrology) or a chain of cause and effect which can be traced back to some first cause, then such Evil actions can only be thought of as a product of Nature and Divine Reason. Yet if these actions really are just expressions of the principles of Nature, then we must place the blame for Evil on the principles of Nature.

To resolve this conflict, we must understand that Evil actions are only involuntary in the sense that the goal that motivates acts of Evil is not Evil in of itself. Evil acts are the result of errors in moral judgement. Still, the actions of Evil people are taken voluntarily (even if by mistake), and thus those who commit these Evil deeds are responsible for them. The responsibility for such sins derives from the agency of those who commit Evil acts.

The Necessity which results in Evil is not some sort of external force which overtakes people and makes them do Evil things. Necessity only entails that Evil exists in a universal sense. It does not cause the individual acts of Evil which free agents choose to commit. Astrology does not revoke our free will. After all, if everything were set in motion by the Gods (i.e. the Heavenly bodies like Jupiter, Mars, etc.), then everything would be the way that the Gods intended. Even the impious would be helpless and unable to disobey. The truth is that the acts of Evil people originate within their own power to act freely. Further, even if everything can be derived from some primordial principle, the chains of cause and effect include those who are themselves causal agents. Human Beings are causal agents. People inherently seek the Good, and this aspect of Humanity which seeks the Good is also the source of their causal agency.

3.2.11 Reason Produces Everything, and Not All Things Can Be Good

Must we conclude that all things are a product of Necessity, determined by chains of cause and effect? Doesn't this mean that everything is the best it can possibly be (because things are the only way they can be)?

The answer to both of these questions is no. It is Reason which governs the world via the expression of Intellectual Principles. It is Reason which wills things to be the way that they are. Reason is even responsible for producing things which are Evil. It cannot will everything to be Good, just as an artist cannot make an animal comprised of only eyes. It also cannot will for everything to be Divine. It produces the Gods, but also Daemons (i.e. Guardians, Celestial spirits.) as an intermediary between the Gods and animals. Then it produces Human Beings, then beasts. All are graded in a hierarchy. It is not the case that Reason produces these lower Beings because it would be jealous of them if they were its equal. Rather, Reason necessarily is full of differentiated varieties of Intellectual Beings. Since differentiation means that everything cannot be the same, Reason dictates that some things must be lessor or greater than others.

When Human Beings decry that the world is unfair and Evil, we are like people who have no knowledge of painting judging the colors chosen by a master artist. We are like illiterate fools complaining that all of the characters in a drama are not heroes. Some must be servants, others simple rural people, and others provide comedic relief. The artist in reality has chosen the appropriate color for every part of their painting. A proper drama must contain these disparate elements in order for its story to have impact.

3.2.12 All Things Must Be Different, But Are Suitably Placed

Reason generates all of the things of this world via the expression of Intellectual Principles in Matter. It generates without sacrificing any of its fundamental nature, which is to be comprised of differentiated parts. It acquires this trait from Divine Intellect which directly precedes it. Given that the sensible world is generated in this way, it is impossible for the sensible world to be any more Beautiful than it already is.

It is impossible that the generated world could be made of parts which themselves were equal. The difference of each part of Reason forms the unique identity of each particular thing. Since Reason must generate all things, and since things must be different in order for them to have their own individual identity, it is illogical to denigrate Reason because some things are lessor or greater than others.

If Reason generated things into the world which were not already a part of it and forced them into the order of the universe without understanding their nature (because it does not contain them), this could only be to the detriment of these things. Thus, this is clearly not the case. All things Reason generates,

including Souls, must be a part of it. Reason must contain them, as it understands all things and fits them into a place suitable to their quality.

3.2.13 Reason Produces in Accordance With Justice

We must not overlook the observation that we can only evaluate Reason and Divine Justice if we consider more than just the present moment. There is the future and past to consider, as well as future and past lives. Thus, a malicious master will be made into a slave because of their past activities. Further, this will be to the person's benefit as it will improve them for the future. Those who are rich will be made poor, as poverty is not a hindrance to the Good. Those who commit murder unjustly will be killed themselves. Thus, an act which is unjust in of itself (namely the murder of the former murderer) will none the less produce Justice. Reason ensures that those who must be punished meet those who are able to punish them.

It is certainly not mere random chance which causes a person to become a slave, a prisoner, or the victim of a bodily harm. The person who suffers inflicted this suffering on others in the past or a prior life. A man that kills his mother will become a woman in their next life, and will be murdered by their son in turn. A man who violates a woman will become a woman who gets violated. Thus, we have the Divine name for Adrasteia (who represents fate, consequence, and the inescapability of punishment). That each person is punished according to their Evil deeds is truly Adrasteia (i.e. inescapable), Justice, and Divine Wisdom.

We cannot deny that an Eternal Order pervades the entire universe, from the most minute of details through the vastness of its totality. The craftsmanship of the universe is evident not only in the Divinities, but even in the most insignificant things which some might assume that Providence ignores. It is in the wildest of beasts, and the most simple of plants. Even plants exude Beauty in the form of their leaves, fruit, and flowers. They grow in all varieties so effortlessly and graciously.

These things were not produced once only to die and disappear. They are eternally reborn in a variety ways. The Heavenly Bodies impart influence over them differently as their position in the Heavenly circuit changes.

In this world of flux, no change occurs randomly by chance. When things change Form, they do so in accordance with the laws of Beauty and in ways which suit the Divine powers. Divinity produces in accordance with its own nature, and its nature is in an expression of its Essence. This essence is to produce things in a way that is consistent with Justice and Beauty. After all, if Justice and Beauty were not derived from the Divine, where else could they come from?

3.2.14 Differentiation Necessitates Difference and Inequality, But All Things Reflect Divine Beauty

The order of the universe is consistent with Divine Intellect, yet it is not a product of a discursive reasoning process. Even of some Being possessed the most capable faculty of Reason possible, they would be amazed to find themselves unable to deduce any possible improvements. Even the Divinity reflected in objects of the realm of differentiation express a universal order which conforms to a standard superior to anything which could be produced by a process of reasoning.

For Eternal Beings which have no beginning, it is impossible to find a producing source of them to place any blame upon. It is further impossible to place any blame on the Intellectual sources for the objects of the sensible realm unless it is argued that the perfection of the Eternal Divine should be equally extended into the sensible world. In this case, the difference between the Intellectual and Sensible

realms would be destroyed, uniting them both together. This would be to demand each Being to take on more Good than is possible instead of realizing that each particular thing receives Good sufficient to its purpose.

Reason extends to all things, which necessitates differentiation. If things are different, some must be greater and others lesser. Every part belongs to the whole it comprises. If nothing was different, then there could only be one homogenous thing. The only way to make all of the parts of something equal is to remove them all.

This is why in the Divine, each Being is universal and encompasses all of its variant manifestations. Down here below, each Being is a single particular thing. Each Human Being is a part of Humanity, not Humanity as a whole. But wherever there is something particular there are also Universals, Divine Intellectual Beings. Each particular Being which participates in a Universal Being comprises it. Yet a single Human Being cannot be expected to encapsulate the Good of all Humanity. Such a person would cease to be a particular individual. This isn't to say that the universal bears any grudge against a particular for improving itself. As a particular thing improves, it transitively improves the whole of which it is a part as well. Indeed, a particular thing improves by harmonizing with the transcend whole that it is a part of. By become like something so great, the individual reflects some of this greatness themselves.

Thus, even a Human Being from the lowly realm of sensible things can produce a glimmer of the Divine through their achievements. The stars shine back in the Divine firmament, such that everything together is as Beautiful as though it were forged and ensouled by Hephaestus himself.

3.2.15 Experiences of the Sensible World Are Like Theatre

This conception of things is adequate when considering each thing in of itself. Yet we run into problems when considering how these things interact and weave together. Animals hunt and eat one another, and even Human Beings will attack each other. War is ongoing and never ceases. If Reason really produces each thing, it is difficult to understand how these things which are in conflict can be said to participate in the unified order.

These challenges are difficult to resolve with our answers thus far. Namely that the whole of the cosmos is as Good as it can possibly be, that its present state is removed from Good out of the necessity of Evil and Matter, and that this arrangement is unavoidable and impossible to improve. That Matter is the cause of this Evil, but was produced by Reason to be as it is for the benefit the transcend whole. Divine Reason must produce everything (via the expression of Intellectual Principles). Since everything has this same source, why must everything be at war with one another?

Why do Humans and Animals hunt and eat each other? For one, animals must consume each other. They cannot remain healthy by themselves without consuming other things, even if nothing was to cause them harm externally. Is this really so bad? All living things must die. Isn't it better that they might provide a benefit to others in this death? Further, the dead are reborn into a new form. The death of an animal is really no different than the death of a character in a play. The actor changes costumes, and takes on a new image and plays a new role. The actor is not actually killed. The exit from the body is no different than an actor leaving the stage after they have no more lines to recite. They will return to the stage for their next performance. What then is so dreadful about death?

Surely to live and die is better than to have never existed in the first place. The alternative to life and death is the bleak preclusion of existence at all. Yet the universe is teeming with life. It produces

everything in variety, transmuting them from life to life, and bestowing them with Beauty proportional to their form. These lives are like the puppets of the Gods.

War among Human Beings, a well choreographed Pyrrhic dance of death, is proof that the concerns of Human Beings are childish, and death is not so terrible. To die in battle is merely to meet the inevitable before old age would have produced the same result. Those who die may be reborn again sooner. In death, those who were robbed of their material objects in life will realize that they never really possessed anything. They might laugh at the fact that the criminals who robbed them don't possess anything either. Those who are never robbed suffer more than those who do get robbed as a consequence of retaining their material possessions. Murder, death, crime, pillage, and war are nothing more than theatre. Each death is a mere transformation, like the change of costumes. Sorrow and grief are just performances.

In our lives within the sensible world, it is not the Soul, but the shadow of a Human Being which suffers, grieves, and in general performs for the theatre. These events concern those who know only of this lower life. This lower life which is really external to us. Lament is for those who do not realize that our experiences of sufferings in this realm are just games. The truly serious person only concerns themselves with things that are actually important. The frivolous person is overtaken with concern for the inconsequential. Anyone who gets swept up in the performance of a frivolous person should know that they have fallen for child's play and left reality and their own nature behind.

If Socrates himself were to play such games, it would only be the Human shadow external to Socrates himself who plays. We should take note that cries and wails do not themselves prove that an experience of suffering is actually so bad. It is the nature of children to cry over imaginary problems.

3.2.16 Differentiation Produces Contraries and Conflict

If all of this is true, how can there be room for Evil, wickedness, and moral error? If everything is going well, then how can there be agents within the system who are unjust? If no one is unjust or sinful, how is it possible for people to be unhappy? How can we refer to some things as natural and other things as unnatural if everything conforms to Nature? This view appears to make impiety impossible, as everything is managed by Divinity itself. The whole ordeal resembles an author writing a character whose purpose is to insult the creator of the story.

To clear this confusion, we will once again state what Reason is and why it makes sense that it produces things the way that it does. Reason is not pure Intellect or the Divine Intellect itself. It is also not derived purely from Soul, though it is dependent on it. Reason is the expression of Principles from Intellect via Soul. The expression of Intellect through Soul produces a life which possesses these Intellectual Principles without effort.

All Life, even the lowest of varieties, consists in activity. It is worth noting that this does not include uncalculated activity, like the spreading of Fire. Even life without the ability to sense things is more than haphazard movement. For every Being that participates in Life, Reason is present. Life's movement conforms to Reason, which simply means that its movement is patterned. Life acts out this pattern, like a dancer performing their choreographed concert. The dancer is like Life, which both moves and expresses something with that movement. In a sense, it is the choreography that moves the dancer, as it determines where they should move next and how. Thus, All Life is said to be patterns of movement.

So, Reason, this expression of Principles, is derived from Intellect and the Principle of Life. Intellect and the Principle of Life are both full, unified, and singular. Reason, however, does not possess the unity, fullness, and singularity of Intellect and Life. As a result, Reason does not communicate the entirety of Intellect and Life to each individual thing. It sets each thing in motion individually, leaving them incomplete as a result (because they exclude everything that they are not). The result of this particularization and incompleteness is that individuals often end up in conflict with one another. These individuals interact in these conflicts, and thus in a way these conflicts unify the individual things in conflict together even though they remain distinct. Although the parts of the unified whole are in conflict, their interactions prove that they all are a part of a single unified system. It is the same as how the different scenes and characters in a play can be taken separately, but combine to form the unified singular play. Of course, the plot of the play is unified even though its elements are in conflict with one another. These conflicts form the narrative of the play, just like the unique musical voices in an orchestra harmonize to form a symphony.

Unlike the instruments in a symphony, the universe is the expression of a single Principle. The disparate voices in a symphony each have their own source. In the universe, the constituent parts in conflict all have the same source. Perhaps a better analogy would be different notes coming from the same instrument. The harmony of music produced by an instrument stems from notes which are higher or lower in pitch than others. This harmony both unifies the notes into a single song, but this song then participates in the Principle of Harmony itself. After all, a song itself is something which is harmonized. Thus, we can see that unified wholes are comprised of constituent parts, and these constituent parts in turn may be comprised of additional parts.

The parts of the universe are often antithetical to one another. There is hot and cold, winged and unwinged, with feet and without feet, as well as rational and irrational. Indeed, within a single animal, its organs are often in conflict with one another even though its parts combine to form the unified whole that is that animal itself. Each part of an animal is still an expression of the singular Intellectual Principle of that animal. Indeed, the particularization of the parts of something necessitates conflict (in the sense that these parts remain distinct are unified into one single thing). So, this conflict can be thought of as forming the substance of each thing's Being.

If there was no multiplicity, Reason could not be universal (in that it accounts for all individual things), and it wouldn't even exist as a differentiated thing (because there would be no differentiation anywhere). Since Reason is a distinct thing, it exists within the realm of particularization and must contain parts which are identified by their differences. The greatest of all differences is opposition (i.e. contrariety, conflict). If things must be different from one another in order to have their own individual existence, then all individual things will be different. Consequently, some things will necessarily be at the extreme ends of opposition. Thus, the completion of the universe requires not only differentiation, but the most extreme ends of things which are contrary to one another.

3.2.17 Each Thing Contributes Uniquely and Necessarily to the Whole

The Nature of Reason is demonstrated in its act of producing contrary things. The greater the multiplicity within the Intellectual Principle that Reason expresses, the more polarized the contraries produced to facilitate the expression of the Intellectual Principle. This is why the Sensible realm is so much less united than the Principle it is an expression of. It contains more multiplicity and contrariety. This is also why within an individual, there is greater unity and a shared desire for the Life of that individual. An individual's selfishness causes its component parts to be more united. This enthusiasm also leads to destruction, as individuals often destroy what they desire if the thing they desire is

destructible. Selfishness causes each individual to try to obtain everything that they can in a misguided attempt to return to unity.

Within each individual is both Good and Evil, like the contrary motions a dancer makes in the course of a single unified performance. Some movements represent Good and others represent Evil, but the totality of the performance we deem Good. The combination of the two is by design.

Does this mean that there is no such thing as wickedness? No. It means that, while individuals do wicked things, they are not wicked in of themselves. Does this mean that people are to be forgiven for their Evil? It is Reason which dictates what we forgive and what we do not. Reason sees that individuals are accountable to their actions, even if Reason is the source of these actions.

All individuals derive from the same Principle. Yet all of them are different. Some are Good, even more are Evil. Yet like in a play, each of these individuals are like a character. The director gives each actor a role suitable to their personality. Thus, in the universe, every Good person has a purpose and every Evil person has a purpose. Each person naturally reaches the position, Good or Evil, that suits them most. An actor in a play acts and speaks in accordance with the script, regardless as to whether it is Good or Evil.

In a play, the writer provides the story. Yet each actor imparts their own quality, for better or for worse. The actor does more than merely repeat their lines. The genius artists of the world can only ever imitate the real drama that is the universe. In the universe, Soul takes on the role it was assigned by the director. Just as actors in a play get their costumes and wardrobe, whether luxurious robes or tattered rags, Soul takes on fortune or poverty in accordance with the Intellectual Principle it expresses. Thus, a Soul is assigned a lot in life suitable to the part it must play and in accordance with Reason. Soul in turn harmonizes its allotments to achieve its purpose. Soul aligns itself to the role it was assigned in accordance with Reason, and in doing so it has harmonized itself with the Principle of the larger drama it is part of. After it has fulfilled the requirements of its role, Soul then imparts its unique character in the places remaining which have not been prescribed by Reason.

Soul resembles a singer lending their unique voice to a prewritten song. A voice can impart its quality, whether beautiful or ugly, to the song that it is performing. Regardless of the quality of the voice, the notes of the song remain the same. A bad performance does not equate to a bad song. A skilled director will have a low opinion of bad actors and fire them from the performance. Equally, they will admire a good actor and attempt to guide them to bigger roles and additional productions. The bad actors are given less substantial roles in less important plays. This is the manner in which Soul enters the drama of the universe. It makes itself a part of the production and adds its unique strengths and weaknesses. After it enters the drama of the universe, it receives its rewards and punishments in accordance with the performance that it gives.

Souls exist in a world that extends beyond the stage itself. Yet the director of the universe has given them agency to choose and perform their own actions. They are provided with a wide array of choices in terms of their place in the universe. Thus, each Soul is responsible for their rewards and punishments, as they have worked to bring them about. They chose their own place in the universe in accordance with their Nature. Therefore, they fit into the Reason of the universe itself. Each Soul is adjusted in accordance with the environment they chose, like a finely tuned instrument. A well-adjusted Soul and a well-tuned instrument are well tuned because they are harmonized with a Principle. The Soul is like an instrument tuned to play the notes of a particular song, and is similarly tuned within the confines of its tuning range. The whole instrument sounds beautiful if each of its parts is in the right place. Even the

Souls destined for the darkness of Tartarus contribute to the Beauty of the universe with their horrible cries.

The whole of the universe is Beautiful when each individual acts like they are more than mere stones. Each individual must contribute to the harmony and Beauty of the transcendent whole by uttering the sound most suitable to them as individuals. The disparate voices combine into a single song. Reason is One unity, but is also comprised of parts which are not equal. Thus, there are different parts of the universe, and some are better or worse than others. Souls are not equal, but rather each Soul is shaped appropriately for its place. Each Soul is not the same, just as the pipes on a pan-flute are not the same. Each pipe is different such that it produces a different note. Each note is suitable to each pipe as well as the instrument itself. As each pipe plays its particular note, it helps achieve the purpose of the instrument as a whole.

Thus, what is Bad for an individual can be Good for the whole. That which is contrary to the Nature of an individual can be suitable to the Nature of the whole. An executioner does unsavory work, but completes a necessary job for a well run city. Thus, even what appears unsavory plays a role in the system as a whole.

3.2.18 Both Good and Evil are Prescribed by Reason

Souls differ in their affinity for Vice and Virtue. There are many reasons why, but innate natural tendencies play a very large role. This is a necessary reflection of the differentiation within the parts that make up the Intellectual Principle of Soul. Since the parts are different, they must also be unequal. We should also note that in addition to the Intellectual realm, Soul has two additional phases. Soul manifests on three different levels (i.e. Intellectual, Reasoning, Unreasoning). Thus, Soul's activities may manifest in any combination of its phases (or any phase individually).

To illuminate this, we will return to the metaphor of acting. Imagine a play in which the writer did not include specific lines, and the actors must improvise them during the performance. The actors become more than mere actors. They become agents of the writer. It is this connection to the writer that connects the actors together into a cohesive story, as the writer can fill in the gaps between the improvised segments.

In the universe, all occurrences and their consequences are brought together under Reason. There are reasons things happen, and these happenings become the reasons for future things. Reason itself sees that everything happens in accordance with the plan. Thus, from adultery or rape, a child might be born who is destined for greatness. Where wicked cities succumb to violence, a virtuous city might arise from its ruins.

Some might object that it's absurd to say that Souls are primarily responsible for their own actions, which might be Good or Evil. In doing so, we will not only remove Reason from responsibility for any Evil activities, we also prevent it from receiving credit for the Good. Yet why not consider that these Souls are the representatives of Reason, enacting its plan? This is how we conceive of actors performing a play created by a writer. In the universe itself, why not consider that even the quality of the performance of each actor is in accordance with Reason? Since the universal drama is more perfect than any drama written by humans, does it not make sense that the things within it would be perfect representations of the Principle they derive from?

Then what is Reason's purpose for Evil? Further, doesn't this conception remove all power and responsibility from Souls, even those which are the best and nearest to Divinity? They would be reduced to particular expressions of an Intellectual Principle. If so, are all expressions of Intellectual Principles Souls? Is the Reason for the universe itself a Soul? If not, why are some Expressions of Intellectual Principles Souls, while others are just Reasons?